Messenger and Visitor

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THE PRIVY COUNCIL AND SUNDAY LAWS.

The Imperial Privy Council recently delivered judgment in an appeal from the Province of Ontario in the matter of the Attorney General for the Province of Ontario and the Hamilton Street Railway Company and others, to which the Privy Council, by way of appeal, granted leave from the Court of Appeal for Ontario, the question involved being the validity of the Lord's Day Act of that Province. The Ontario Court had affirmed the validity of the Act, but this judgment was reversed by their Lordships of the Privy Council and the Lord's Day Act of Ontario, accordingly declared to be void. The ground upon which the law was declared invalid is that by the Act of Union no right to enact criminal law is expressly granted to the Dominion Parliament. As this right is granted to the other Provinces, as to Ontario, it would appear to follow that all laws enacted since Confederation by any Provincial Legislature for the observance of the Lord's Day, or at least all that involve criminal processes, are by this decision of the Privy Council declared void. In this view of the case the decision is one of a wide-sweeping and disturbing character. But this is not all. It is at least plausibly contended that all other Provincial laws enacted since Confederation, which in their enforcement demand the imprisonment of the offender, are also by this decision made *ultra vires*. And it is perhaps not beyond question whether laws, of this kind enacted before Confederation will stand the test of validity. It has already been argued before a Court in Toronto by Mr. J. C. Rodmette, K. C., that the Ontario Liquor License Act is invalid, at least in so far as it imposes imprisonment for second and third offences. But if that contention does not flow, are we to explain the decision of the Privy Council in the Manitoba Liquor Act, declaring that Act within the power of the Provincial Legislature? Other lawyers, including Mr. J. R. Cartwright, Deputy Attorney General of Ontario, discredit Mr. Rodmette's argument and contend for the validity of the Ontario License Act on the ground that the B. N. A. Act gave to the Provincial Legislatures the right to make laws in reference to saloon, tavern and other licenses for the raising of a revenue for Provincial, Municipal or local purposes, with the right to impose fines, penalties or imprisonment for the enforcement of such laws. But admitting the justice of this contention it would still remain to be shown that the Manitoba Liquor Act belonged to the same category. And if it could not properly be described as a license law, then it would seem to have contravened the B. N. A. Act in the same respect as the Ontario Lord's Day Act. But as the law lords of the Privy Council have declared the Manitoba Act valid and the Ontario Act invalid, the inference would seem to be that they regarded the Manitoba Act as a license act. As matters now stand there is left much to be desired in respect to a sure determination of the respective spheres of the Dominion and Provincial Parliaments. The decision of the Privy Council has brought embarrassment to those who are working for a better enforcement of the laws for the better observance of the Lord's day. It will be necessary now to go to the Dominion Parliament for the legislation desired, and it may not be easy to harmonize in this matter the ideas and practices of the different provinces. It will probably be found, however, that in the older Provinces the observance of the day is pretty thoroughly safeguarded by Provincial laws which antedate confederation.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF B. Y. P. UNION.

The Convention was held at Atlanta, Georgia, July 9-12; the report was published at Chicago, and a copy reached us July 28th. It has 199 pages of closely printed matter. The addresses are reported in full by Thos. Bengough, stenographer of Toronto.

How the book is prepared and published within a fortnight from the close of the Convention must be a matter of great astonishment to Baptists of these Provinces who are unable to get their Year Book printed in a shorter space than from three to six months.

We would respectfully invite the attention of the Maritime Convention, soon to assemble in St. John, to this subject.

The Convention itself was, if we may judge from the report, a distinct success. Many able addresses on topics connected with Christian service, which was the keyword, were delivered.

Dr. Meeser spoke on "The Call to Service." "The test of a religion is what the religion does for man, rather than what man does for the religion. Religion begins with an act of God in the soul. The superior serves the inferior." Service, and not culture is the primary law of life. "For the mercenary forehead memory has no crown. Society soon forgets him who only remembers himself. As there is no illiterate scholar, and no ignorant Shakespeare, so there is no self-seeking hero." Those whom men remember with love and gratitude are they who were crowned with self-sacrifice in service to their fellows."

Rev. W. T. Stackhouse, our own Stackhouse, now lent to Manitoba for a season, spoke on "Motives for Service;" the first motive considered was *Love to God*. Love is the highest thing in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. Love is the golden cord that binds us to Almighty God, in a perpetual consciousness of our reconciliation to him. Love is indispensable to a proper appreciation and application of the Scriptures. The second motive discussed was Faith and other motives named were a desire to win mankind to the service of God and a desire to adhere to the claims of divine truth. Mr. Stackhouse's address was greeted with loud applause as it deserved to be. "Development of Character," "Acquirement of Knowledge," "Training" were some of the other subjects discussed. Rev. Henry Porter's subject was: "Christian Young People and Society."

Rev. H. H. Roach, of St. John, spoke for the Maritime Provinces. "I represent a trinity of ideas of 50,000 Baptists in the Maritime Provinces—Culture, holiness, service. We have been pouring out our lives to the neighboring republic, but still we number 50,000. We are organizing for aggressive work."

These brief extracts will show that the convention brought forth and is widely distributing sentiments and principles of a very high order. Our Baptist young people have many privileges.

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THE STORY OF DAVID AND GOLIATH.

The story of David and Goliath, which furnishes the lesson for study in our Bible schools next Sunday, holds some important lessons and suggestions. It is true that the passage may easily be used to teach lessons which are really not to be found in it, and doubtless it is frequently so used. The passage for instance affords no ground for the conclusion that equipment and careful preparation are without value either in an army or in a church. The fact that David went against Goliath without armor, and defeated and slew him by means of his shepherd's sling did not prove that armor is a useless provision. And Saul would have been ill-advised if he had directed his soldiers to throw aside their spears and swords and javelins, and provide themselves only with slings and smooth stones from the brook, after the example of the young shepherd who had slain the Philistine champion. Circumstances alter cases. The best possible equipment for a shepherd going to fight a giant may be a very poor equipment indeed for soldiers who are going to fight with ordinary enemies under usual conditions. One should distinguish clearly between the questions—what is the best equipment for David going to fight Goliath? and what is the best equipment for the soldiers of Israel going to fight against the Philistine hosts? for these questions are different. The fact that one minister here and another there, with very little education, have had notable success in attacking the strongholds of evil and in promoting the cause of Christ, does not prove that colleges are unnecessary and that education is more a hindrance than a help to the Christian minister.

The teaching of the passage on this point is rather this, that when a man is going to fight against the enemies of the Lord he is bound to array himself in the armor which he can use most effectively, and then trust, not his own prowess, but in God, for the victory. David did not discard Saul's armor because it was not good for a warrior who was disciplined in its use, nor because if he went in that armor the Lord *could not* give him the victory over the giant; but rather because when he went to fight against the enemy of his people and his God he felt bound to do his best, and he felt sure that he could do much better with the sling and stones, which he knew how to use so effectively, than with the cumbersome armor which he had not proved. To a youth of weaker faith and less noble spirit there would have been a strong temptation to go forth as Israel's recognized champion and in the King's own armor, but vanity would have been fatal to success. David's aim was not personal glory but a demonstration that the Lord was able to help Israel, and as the Lord's champion he must do his best. David learned afterwards to use sword and shield, bow and javelin—no man more effectively—but he was willing to begin at the beginning and not to pretend to things that were beyond him. He was willing to go forth to battle with a staff and a sling, derided not only by the Philistine champion, but by his own brethren, and his simple good judgment, his dauntless courage and his faith in the Lord won for him and for Israel a mighty victory.

Is there not an important lesson here? How many men fail to slay their Goliaths, not because they have put on armor, but because they have clothed themselves in vanity. The armor in which they array themselves is not their own but some larger man's. They may rattle around in it and make a parade of it, but they have not proved it, and they slay no giants. Probably this gets near to the cause of most of the failures which we make in the Lord's service. It is a lack of humility, courage and faith. We are not willing to do just simply, modestly and bravely the thing that we can do. We must needs get into somebody's armor and parade our importance in the sight of Israel and the Philistines. In almost every department of human affairs the men who have achieved great things are those who began with doing their very best with such instruments as they knew how to use and with such opportunities as came to their hands, and this is as true in the spiritual realm as elsewhere.

This story concerning David and Goliath seems to emphasize especially the value of three things. These three things are courage, faith and experience. David was a man of courage. When he heard the boastings of the great Philistine he did not shrink away in terror, but his heart swelled in indignation and his nerves tingled to go forth and meet this defier of Israel and Israel's God. But David's courage was united to, and sustained by, faith. It was not, merely in his own strength or prowess that he would go forth to meet the Philistine, but in the name and the strength of Israel's God. David's heart was strong because he believed that the Lord was able and ready to help his people against the proud Philistines. A man cannot accomplish much without courage, and courage to be effective must be steadied and strengthened by faith. Then the man who has a sturdy courage and a real living faith is sure to have experience. Young as he was David had had experience. His courage had already been tested by encounters with wild beasts, and his faith had been strengthened by the deliverance he had experienced. So that the young man was able to stand up in the presence of Saul and tell what the Lord *had done* for him. And there was such confidence in his words that the King could no longer refuse his request to go and meet the Philistine. It is these three things that we need—courage, faith and experience, to give us confidence in the presence of our enemies and victory in the day of conflict.

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Editorial Notes.

—Readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR will be very glad to learn directly from Dr. Trotter, through the letter which appears in another column, that he is now recovering from the disability from which he has been suffering and that he hopes now very soon to be in the enjoyment of his usual health and strength. Concerning Dr. Trotter's letter we need only say that the matters to which it calls attention are highly important, and should command the interest of all who are interested in our educational work.

—The Duke of Fife, who is son-in-law to King Edward, in making a speech on the occasion of some public ceremony a few days ago, remarked incidentally that for the past five years he had been a total abstainer from all intoxicating drinks, and that not because he had been ordered by his physicians to abstain, but because he believed it to be best for him. If all the titled personages of the British Isles should come to a similar conclusion and follow his grace of Fife's example, the blessing accruing to the nation would be incalculable.

—A Kansas paper gives the following statement as to the distribution of the profits (?) attending the production of whisky from a bushel of corn: the distiller, from the bushel of corn (with the aid of various harmful products and adulterations) makes four gallons of whisky. These four gallons of whisky retail at $16.40. The farmer who raises the corn gets from twenty-five to fifty cents. The United States Government through its tax on whisky gets $4.40. The railway company gets $1.00. The drayman who hauls the whisky gets fifteen cents. The retailor gets $7.00. The man who drinks the whisky gets drunk. His wife gets hunger and sorrow. His children get rags and insufficient food.

—While organic union is not to be expected between ecclesiastical bodies which differ widely in respect either to doctrine or to polity, there would seem to be every reason why churches which are virtually of the same faith and order should come together in visible bonds of fellowship. Wherever church union can take place without a sacrifice of principle it should be effected. Within recent years there have been several successful movements of closely related denominations toward each other to the great advantage of those concerned. And there are still others which might